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ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

Report of the Netherlands

Paper submitted by the Netherlands**

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1. Summary

Though a national geographical names authority is still lacking in the Netherlands, the country still manages to participate in the work of UNGEGN. The problem of having no organization that can confer official status to the spelling of geographical names has been circumvented by a procedure devised by the country's mapping organisations to take those geographical name spellings as the official ones that have been mentioned in some official act or charter, such as the Municipality-law or the Elections-law.

These names are collected and documented by the Topographic Survey, and it is this organisation that lists them in gazetteers and toponymic names files. The work on name files has been boosted recently by the cooperation of a private publisher, Wolters-Noordhoff, that initiated a publications programme of topographic map series at the scale of 1:50 000 and 1:25 000 in atlas format, for which names indexes were required. These name index files were later extended by the Topographic Survey to comply with NATO standards in this field.

Work has been done, the last five years, on the production of a list of country names, as a precursor of a more extended list of exonyms. As the list of country names has to be approved of by both Belgium and the Netherlands (the official decisions regarding the Dutch language have to be approved by a joint Belgian-Netherlands linguistic body, the "Taalunie") the decision process is an extended one, and no early official approval is expected.

The Netherlands have been active in the recent past in the organisation of toponymy courses and are prepared to continue this active role.

2. National Standardization

The Dutch spelling law of 1947 stated that this law would not be applicable to geographical names (streetnames excepted) but that the spelling of these geographical names in the Netherlands would be decided on later, and would be defined in a special act. Though a proposal for this act has been prepared for and presented to the Minister of Education in 1974, there has been no reaction yet. In default of decision-making in this field, the present procedure in ascertaining geographical names spelling is to look for official acts and charters that contain geographical names, and to take the spellings used therein, even if these acts were never passed with the aim of defining the orthography of the geographical names they contained. But this is the procedure used by the Topografische Dienst Nederland (Topographic Survey of the Netherlands), Rijkswaterstaat (Water Management Board) and the Hydrografische Dienst (Hydrographic Office).

2. There is no official National geographical names authority in the Netherlands, though the necessary expertise is certain-

ly available, for instance at the P.J.Meertens Institute for Dialectology and Onomastics, of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam. It was here that the proposal for the Minister of Education mentioned in §2 was prepared, under the directorship of Prof.Dr.D.P.Blok, well-known to UNGEGN.

3. Gazetteers/Toponymic data files

In the period September 1987-March 1988 a gazetteer for the Topographic map of the Netherlands on the scale 1:50 000 series was elaborated by the Topografische Dienst Nederland, it was printed and published by that same organization in Emmen in June 1988. It bears the title "Namenregister Kaartserie 1:50.000 (M 733)". In the same year a revised edition of the gazetteer for the Topographic map of the Netherlands on the scale 1:250 000 series was published as well.

These gazetteers contain all the feature names appearing on these map series, object codes, geographical coordinates as well as UTM coordinates, administrative codes, sheet and edition numbers of the maps the names have been taken from, and some remarks that refer to the abbreviations used. In the absence of a National Geographical Names Authority that can confer them official status, the spelling of the geographical names corresponds to the orthography used in current official documents.

4. Both the gazetteers mentioned in §3 can be obtained in digital format as well. The gazetteer of the 1:50 000 topographic mapseries is a spin-off of a joint project to publish this 1:50 000 map series in atlas format, by the Topographic Survey and Wolters-Noordhoff publishing house. The first edition of this atlas was published in 1987, a third edition is prepared now. As an atlas should contain an index, a list of geographical names was produced to serve this purpose. This basic file has since been extended to contain a more detailed categorization.

5. At the same time, a project has been under way to publish the Topographic map of the Netherlands at the scale 1:25 000 series in atlas format. The last volume of this 14 volume series was published in november 1991. All these 1:25 000 atlas volumes have their indexes, produced from separate files. A combination of these files is for sale from Wolters-Noordhoff Atlas Productions, PO Box 58, 9700 MB, Groningen. Next to the names it contains object codes, local coordinates and administrative data.

Eventually, after processing, this 1:25 000 names database will be for sale as well from the Topografische Dienst Nederland (PO Box 115, 7800 AV Emmen). To the Wolters Noordhoff 1:25 000 file UTM coordinates, NATO object codes, and sheet and edition numbers will be added.

6. Glossary of terms

The Netherlands representative participated in the work on the production and definition of a glossary of terms in the langu-

ages of the Dutch and German-speaking Division of UNGEGN, coordinated by the chairman, Prof. Spiess, on behalf of the Working Group for Terminology.

7. List of Country Names

The Governments of Belgium and the Netherlands empowered a new body, the Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union) to produce a list of country names, to serve as the official norm. The ad-hoc commission charged with this task (the Commission for foreign geographical names, chaired by Prof.dr.D.P.Blok) presented this list for approval in June 1989. After preliminary study and corrections applied by the ad-hoc Commission the list is again studied by the Taalunie since 1990 for approval. This official approval is necessary before the list can be implemented for official use. The contents of the list has been circulated by the Netherlands cartographic journal "Kartografisch Tijdschrift".

8. List of Exonyms

Pending the decision of the Nederlandse Taalunie on the approval of the List of Country Names, the second task of the ad-hoc Commission for foreign geographical names has been postponed.

9. Minority names

An increasing number of toponyms in Friesland province, a Frisian language minority area in the Netherlands, is represented on official topographic maps in their Frisian version. A number of municipality names and hydronyms have been officially approved recently by municipal and water management board authorities in their Frisian version. Names of larger populated places are still mostly represented in the Dutch language only on the topographic map series, though the number of exceptions is growing, as a joint programme of changing Dutch name versions on both maps, signposts and in official texts into their Frisian versions is gaining momentum.

10. Training courses in applied toponymy

In november 1989 Prof.dr.F.J.Ormeling sr. from the Netherlands organized, together with Prof.dr.J.Rais, chairman of Bakosurtanal, Indonesia, and in cooperation with ITC, Netherlands, a seminar on applied toponymy in Cipanas, Indonesia, intended for participants from SE Asia and the SW Pacific. This seminar was recommended by UNGEGN. In this two-week training course lecturers from Australia (2), Canada (1), Hungary (1), Indonesia (5), the Netherlands (3) and the United Kingdom (1) participated.

11. At the 15th UNGEGN meeting in Geneva, Prof.dr.F.J.Ormeling jr was elected convenor of the Working Group for toponymy courses. In June/July 1992 he participated in the organisation and the lecturing programme of a toponymy course intended for participants from Southern African countries organized by UNGEGN chairman Dr.P.Raper, co-chair Helen Kerfoot and the

convenor of the UNGEGN terminology group Prof.dr.N.Kadmon, and the University of Pretoria.

12. The Netherlands had offered, at the September 1991 UNGEGN meeting to organize a follow-up toponymy seminar at the International Institute of Aerospace Surveys and Earth Sciences (ITC) in the Netherlands. The UNGEGN secretariat, however, stated at that time that its budget for 1992/3 would not provide an opening for such a seminar.

13. Participation in UN meetings.

Representatives from the Netherlands participated in both the 14th and the 15th meetings of UNGEGN in Geneva, and in the Dutch and German Division meetings in Vienna, Geneva and Rapperswil, Switzerland.

14. Other matters

The Netherlands and Belgium have been cooperating, together with other European Community member countries, in the production of a map of the Community's lesser used languages, to be published by the EC Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (7, Cearnog Mhuirfean, Baile Atha Cliath 2, Ireland). The purpose of this map is to show the areas settled by autochthonous minority language groups. The map was ready for publication by the EC in June 1989.